Expensive life saving drugs

3223. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL:
SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that life saving drugs are very expensive and are not affordable;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps Government proposed to take to ensure that life saving and generic drugs are available at cheaper rates to needy and poor patients?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) to (c) The prices of 74 bulk drugs specified in the First Schedule of the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1995 (DPCO, 95) and the formulations based thereon are controlled in accordance with the provisions of the DPCO, 95 by the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA). In case of any overcharging, action for recovory of overcharged amount is taken by NPPA. Hence, prices of medicines under price control have been effectively controlled and kept low.

Prices of non-Scheduled formulations are fixed by the manufacturers themselves keeping in view various factors like cost of production, marketing/selling expenses, R&D expenses, trade commission, market competition, product innovation, product quality etc. Prices of these drugs are regularly monitored and corrective measures taken where public interest if found to be adversely affected.

The Drug Policy as announced from time to time is directed towards making available quality drugs at reasonable prices to the poor. In the draft National Pharmaceutical Policy, 2006 it has been proposed, *inter alia,* that one of the ways to make available cheaper drugs to people at large and to public health system could be to promote the production and marketing of generic drugs in the country. This may be achieved through preference of generic drugs for public procurement and distribution and free of cost quality certification for generic drugs.

The Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1995 does not distingusih between life saving and other drugs. There are no specific norms or guidelines to determine as to which drug can be classified as life saving drugs. Every drug is general is considered useful in saving and prolonging of life.